

# **HELPFUL REMINDERS THE SCHOOL HEALTH OFFICE**

November 10, 2010

Dear Parents,

In an effort to be proactive, the health office would like to take a moment to remind families of helpful measures you can take to reduce the possibility of head lice incidence, now that the weather is getting cooler and students are more often confined to the indoors. To avoid multiple cases of infestation we ask that you routinely check your child's hair for nits and lice. If in fact these are discovered, please let school know so that immediate action can be taken. Here are a few tips when checking your child's head:

- Use good lighting. Make sure you use a well-lit area. If lice are present, once they are exposed to light, they will move away from the light source. You will notice movement on your child's scalp.
- Check sections of hair and scalp. Pin or pull back the opposite section that you are checking. In the area being checked, separate the hair in small sections, checking close to the scalp and down to the middle of the hair shafts.
- Nits or lice eggs will be near the scalp and hair root. They are white and appear as dandruff. They are distinguished by their ability to stick to the hair shaft when trying to remove them. Dandruff is easily removed nits are not. Nits will be clustered together. You will see a few or many on the hair shaft. These need to be manually removed. You can also use a very fine tooth comb to help removal of nits. Keep all combs in a plastic baggy after use to avoid further infestation. Treatment with special lice shampoo will ensure that any live lice are killed.
- Live lice are visible and move about in the hair. They are the size of sesame seeds and are brown in color. They must be removed with a special shampoo available at all pharmacies.
- If nits or lice are discovered the other family members should be checked thoroughly and the environment will need to be cleaned well. All linens should be washed in hot water and all carpeting should be vacuumed. Pillows and stuffed animals should be bagged and sealed for 72 hours. This deprives oxygen to any potential lice or nit.

Please consult with your pediatrician or school nurse if you are in doubt. We are a phone call away to help with any questions or concerns regarding identifying infestation and how to proceed.

The best recommendation is prevention. Some suggestions include:

- Keep your child's head gear in their sleeves when in school and keep jackets hung up. Avoid leaving them on the floor or rugs. These are means of travel for lice.
- Have your child bring their own pillow to 'sleepovers.'
- Remind your child not to share hats, hair accessories, or other personal care items.
- Consider braids or pony tails to prevent hair from hanging free.

In an effort to be proactive and prevent head lice incidence, Hollywood School will begin doing random head lice checks. You will be notified in the event that your child has been identified as having an infestation. As always, a letter will be sent home if lice or nits have been found on your child or any cases found in your child's class.

Sincerely,  
School Nurse